

APPENDIX 5

COORDINATION

YAZOO BACKWATER AREA REFORMULATION

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Table of Contents

<u>Item</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	5-1
CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF COORDINATION	5-2

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

<u>No.</u>	<u>Title</u>
1	TRANSCRIPT OF SCOPING MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 1993
2	TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2000
3	REPRESENTATIVE LETTERS FROM NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGO) AND INDIVIDUALS
4	FWS COMMENTS TO 2000 DRAFT REPORT AND DSEIS
5	EPA COMMENTS TO 2000 DRAFT REPORT AND DSEIS
6	RESPONSES TO 2000 DRAFT REPORT A. NGO AND INDIVIDUALS B. FWS C. EPA D. E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE
7	COMMENTS FROM COOPERATING AGENCIES AND VICKSBURG DISTRICT RESPONSES TO REVISED ENVIRONMENTAL APPENDIX REVIEW – JULY 2005
8	COMPLETION OF INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL REVIEW – 10 APRIL 2000 AND 21 JUNE 2007

YAZOO BACKWATER AREA REFORMULATION

APPENDIX 5 COORDINATION

INTRODUCTION

1. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District, conducted intensive coordination activities for the Yazoo Backwater Area Reformulation study completion. The following list of items reflects the chronology of coordination events. Appropriate exhibits are included to illustrate selected significant correspondence and occurrences.
2. The Mississippi River Commission directed the Vicksburg District to undertake a more aggressive public involvement program in 1997. The Vicksburg District facilitated three workshops to identify measures/features to meet the environmental needs within the study area consistent with flood damage reduction. Their goal was to bring local and national environmental groups, state and Federal agencies, local sponsors, and local landowners together to reach a consensus regarding the environmental needs and implementable measures/features to be included in the recommended plan. These meetings, concluding in late 1997, resulted in the second array of alternatives shown in the Main Report.
3. During 1998, the Mississippi River Commission, Vicksburg District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), local sponsors, and other concerned groups and individuals continued coordination activities through correspondence mail and meetings.
4. In 1999, the Mississippi Levee Board requested the Vicksburg District delay the draft report 3 to 6 months to allow time to gain consensus for an alternative that would provide flood protection to the south Delta and enhance the environmental resources of the area. This consensus committee, comprised of local and national environmental groups, state and Federal agencies, and local economic groups, met numerous times in 1999.
5. The draft Yazoo Backwater Area Reformulation report was completed and released to the public on 5 September 2000. On 9 November 2000, the Vicksburg District held a public meeting in Rolling Fork, Mississippi, to gather more public comments. The formal comment period began following release of the draft report and closed on 11 December 2000.

6. During 2000, the Vicksburg District received over 1,400 cards and letters, 4,000 e-mails, and 1 petition commenting on the Draft Report. The Vicksburg District evaluated these comments and developed preliminary responses.
7. The Vicksburg District continued coordination efforts with cooperating agencies during 2000 to 2003.
8. The Vicksburg District, FWS, and EPA held an interagency meeting 14-15 January 2003, focusing on jurisdictional wetlands. All agencies participated in the wetland field sampling during 2003-2004.
9. On 29 July 2005, the Vicksburg District released revised draft environmental appendixes to cooperating agencies that included interagency revisions. The agencies participated in an environmental workshop, reviewing results of the Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program investigations and Flood Event Assessment Tool.
10. The Vicksburg District transmitted the Endangered and Threatened Species Assessment to FWS on 5 December 2005 and requested formal consultation concerning potential impacts to the endangered species pondberry. Formal consultation began on 18 January 2006.
11. During June - August 2006, a USACE team preformed an Independent Technical Review.
12. The Vicksburg District and FWS signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the implementation of the pondberry conservation and recovery program, effective 16 March 2007.
13. The FWS Biological Opinion (BO) on the endangered species pondberry was provided to the Vicksburg District on 2 July 2007.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF COORDINATION

14. The following is a list of chronological events related to coordination.
 - a. Letter from Vicksburg District to EPA, 21 September 1993, requesting EPA assistance as a cooperating agency on the draft report.
 - b. Letter from U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, to Vicksburg District, 29 September 1993, naming a point of contact for their participation as a cooperating agency.
 - c. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 29 October 1993, naming a point of contact for their participation as a cooperating agency.
 - d. Letter from MDWFP to Vicksburg District, 22 September 1993, naming a point of contact for their participation as a cooperating agency.

- e. Letter from John Phillips to Vicksburg District, 15 December 1993, giving support for the pumps at Steele Bayou.
- f. Letter from Claiborne D. Adcock to Vicksburg District, 2 January 1994, requesting flood relief from headwater flooding along the Sunflower River.
- g. Letter from U.S. Forest Service to Vicksburg District, 10 January 1994, requesting additional information on impacts a project might have on the Delta National Forest.
- h. Letter from Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP) to Vicksburg District, 14 January 1994, expressing concerns the project impacts might have on the fisheries in the area.
- i. Letter from Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners to Vicksburg District, 4 December 1996, requesting the Corps discontinue further review of the levee alternative as part of the Yazoo Backwater project.
- j. Letter from Mississippi Wildlife Federation to President, Mississippi River Commission, 28 April 1997, requesting the Corps delay facilitated meetings on Yazoo Backwater pumps project until a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) can be distributed.
- k. Outline of facilitated environmental workshops.
- l. Letter from Solutions, Inc., 30 April 1997, to various Federal, state, and local agencies and environmental groups.
- m. List of participants for Workshop No. 1, 6 May 1997.
- n. Letter, 16 May 1997, from Vicksburg District to various Federal, state, and local agencies and environmental groups, providing information packets requested at the workshops.
- o. Letter to EPA from Vicksburg District, 21 May 1997, accepting a request from EPA to brief the project in Atlanta.
- p. Letter to Vicksburg District from FWS, 27 May 1997, requesting they be involved more in the planning process of the Yazoo Backwater reformulation study.
- q. Summary from Workshop No. 3 held in Vicksburg, 29 May 1997.
- r. Letter from Delta Land Trust to Vicksburg District, 12 June 1997, commenting on workshops and information packets.

- s. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 13 June 1997, regarding clarification on issues raised during the 23 May 1997 video conference between EPA, Vicksburg District, and FWS.
- t. Letter to Vicksburg District from EPA, 23 July 1997.
- u. Letter from Vicksburg District to various Federal, state, and local agencies and environmental groups, 8 July 1997, inviting them to briefings and discussions on the Yazoo Backwater reformulation.
- v. Letters from EPA to Vicksburg District, 14 and 23 July 1997, inviting the Corps to attend a meeting with EPA and FWS to discuss nonstructural strategy for flood damage reduction in the Yazoo Backwater Area.
- w. Meeting agenda and attendees list for 7 August 1997 Yazoo Backwater Area reformulation meeting.
- x. Letter from Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners to Vicksburg District, 10 October 1997, requesting representatives from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and MDWFP be added to the evaluation team.
- y. Letter from Delta Land Trust to Vicksburg District, 14 October 1997, concerning followup comments from 7 August 1997 workshop.
- z. Agenda for 23 October 1997 nonstructural economic analysis meeting.
- aa. Letter from Vicksburg District to Delta Land Trust, 28 October 1997, scheduling a meeting with Delta Land Trust on 5 November 1997 to discuss nonstructural approach flood damage reduction.
- bb. Letter from Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners to Vicksburg District, 21 November 1997, expressing concerns on damages considered to catfish industry in the economic analysis of the Yazoo Backwater Area reformulation.
- cc. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 21 November 1997, discussing the agency's difference in land use acreage.
- dd. Letter from Delta Land Trust to Vicksburg District, 19 February 1998, discussing agricultural intensification benefits.
- ee. Yazoo Backwater meeting agenda, 7 July 1998.
- ff. Letter to Delta Council from Senator Trent Lott, 5 August 1998, providing letters from the Vicksburg District and EPA.

- gg. Agenda for Yazoo Backwater Area reformulation meetings held 31 August, 4 September, 21 September, and 9 December 1998.
- hh. Letter from EPA to Vicksburg District, 14 September 1998, requesting additional information to assist EPA with their Virginia Tech report.
- ii. Letter from EPA to Vicksburg District, 13 October 1998, requesting additional information to assist EPA with their Virginia Tech report.
- jj. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 14 October 1998, requesting information needed for completion of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA).
- kk. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 25 November 1998, responding to 14 October 1998 letter.
- ll. Letter from Vicksburg District to EPA, 10 February 1999, providing responses to FWS questions on the Yazoo Backwater study.
- mm. Letter from Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners to Vicksburg District, 18 March 1999, requesting the Corps delay the draft report 3 to 6 months and inviting the Corps to the initial "consensus meeting."
- nn. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 22 March 1999, discussing different combined structural/nonstructural plans.
- oo. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 26 April 1999, responding to FWS letter of 22 March 1999, discussing different combined structural/nonstructural plans.
- pp. Letter from Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, Gulf Restoration Network, and Sierra Club Mississippi Chapter to Vicksburg District, 20 July 1999, raising concerns of the proposed Yazoo Backwater reformulation project.
- qq. FWCA - Planning Aid Report on the Yazoo Backwater Area Project, September 1999.
- rr. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 6 October 1999, confirming FWS proposed features to be included in the draft report.
- ss. Letter from EPA to Vicksburg District, 12 October 1999, commenting on methodology used for wetland assessment.
- tt. Memorandum for Commander, Mississippi Valley Division, from Deputy Commander for Civil Works, 4 January 2000, subject: Yazoo Backwater Project, Mississippi - Nonstructural Measures.

- uu. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 7 February 2000, funding request for FWS staff working on the Yazoo Backwater study.
- vv. Letter from FWS to the Commander, Mississippi Valley Division, 17 March 2000, concerning ongoing planning of the Yazoo Backwater Project.
- ww. South Delta Residents Property Owners Meeting held in Rolling Fork, Mississippi, on 28 March 2000.
- xx. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 5 April 2000, responding to 12 October 1999 letter concerning wetland methodologies.
- yy. Letter from Commander, Mississippi Valley Division, to FWS, 20 April 2000, clarifying concerns and goals for reformulation of the Yazoo Backwater Project.
- zz. Letter from the Vicksburg District to FWS, 3 May 2000, transmitting the technical appendixes that address the environmental resources from the reformulation of the Yazoo Backwater Area.
- aaa. Letter from Vicksburg District to NRCS, 3 May 2000, transmitting Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form AD-1006 for all alternatives in the reformulation study.
- bbb. Letter from EPA to Vicksburg District, 10 May 2000, requesting additional wetland information.
- ccc. Letter from FWS to the Vicksburg District, 26 May 2000, concerning FWCA responsibilities for the Yazoo Backwater Area Project.
- ddd. Letter from FWS to the Vicksburg District, 30 May 2000, concerning impacts on the endangered plant pondberry.
- eee. Letter from FWS to the Vicksburg District, 31 May 2000, concerning their review of the draft technical appendixes that address the environmental resource impacts for the reformulation of the Yazoo Backwater Area Project.
- fff. Memorandum for Record, 25 August 2000, Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners meeting updates.
- ggg. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 16 October 2000, commenting on their review of Appendix 14: Endangered and Threatened Species Biological Assessment (BA) of the Draft Yazoo Backwater Area.

hhh. Letter from U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, to Vicksburg District, 3 November 2000, providing comments to Draft Supplemental EIS.

iii. Public Meeting Minutes, Yazoo Backwater Area Reformulation, Rolling Fork, Mississippi, 9 November 2000.

jjj. Letter from Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners to Vicksburg District, 6 December 2000, commenting on draft report.

kkk. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 6 December 2000, requesting additional meetings on the Yazoo Backwater reformulation study.

lll. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 8 June 2001, concerning the draft Yazoo Backwater Reformulation report and draft supplement to the EIS.

mmm. Letter from the Vicksburg District to the FWS, 18 July 2001, concerning the draft Yazoo Backwater Reformulation report and draft supplement to the EIS.

nnn. Letter from the Vicksburg District to the FWS, 8 August 2001, responding to FWS letter of 16 October 2000, discussing the endangered plant species in response to comments received.

ooo. Memorandum for Commander, Vicksburg District, 21 December 2001, subject: Yazoo Backwater Area, Mississippi - Draft Reformulation Report Policy Compliance Review Comments.

ppp. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 11 June 2002, regarding interagency agreement on funding and conduct of pondberry studies.

qqq. Letter from FWS to Mississippi Levee Board, 9 July 2002, commenting on support for nonstructural flood control measures.

rrr. Memorandum for HQUSACE, 10 September 2002, subject: Request for ASA(CW) Exception to Selection of the NED Plan for the Yazoo Backwater Area Reformulation Project.

sss. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 6 November 2002, providing planning report on Backwater Reformulation.

ttt. Interagency meeting minutes, 14-15 January 2003, Yazoo Backwater Reformulation and Big Sunflower River Maintenance.

uuu. Letter from EPA to acting ASA(CW), 25 March 2003, commenting on recent discussions with the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center over the Backwater project's inadequate environmental documentation.

vvv. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 24 March 2003, commenting on meetings with Vicksburg District, EPA, and FWS held 14-15 January 2003.

www. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 4 April 2003, responding to 24 March 2003 letter concerning interagency coordination meetings.

xxx. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 7 April 2003, responding to recent interagency coordination.

yyy. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 13 May 2003, responding to 7 April 2003 letter.

zzz. Letter from ASA(CW) to EPA, 19 May 2003, responding to 25 March 2003 letter.

aaaa. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 23 June 2003, commenting on ongoing interagency wetland assessment.

bbbb. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 30 June 2003, requesting information from Lower Yazoo Basin Partnerships concerning cumulative impacts.

cccc. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 15 July 2003, responding to 13 May 2003 letter and assuring FWS of continued coordination and continued commitment to National Environmental Policy Act process.

dddd. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 17 July 2003, requesting additional data on cumulative impacts for the study area.

eeee. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 23 July 2003, responding to 23 June 2003 letter involving coordination efforts.

ffff. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 23 July 2003, in response to 30 June 2003 letter, referring the Vicksburg District to the Lower Delta Partnership for requested data.

gggg. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 12 August 2003, responding to 6 November 2002 FWCA report.

hhhh. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 25 August 2003, responding to 12 August 2003 letter concerning FWCA.

iiii. Letter from American Rivers to Vicksburg District, 18 September 2003, requesting Freedom of Information Act data on Backwater.

jjjj. Letter from FWS to EPA, 17 December 2003, requesting involvement in the wetland delineation process.

kkkk. Letter from FWS to EPA, 22 January 2004, requesting involvement in the wetland delineation process.

llll. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 26 January 2004, requesting to be included in EPA/Vicksburg District coordination efforts.

mmmm. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 11 February 2004, responding to 17 December 2003 letter requesting increased participation.

nnnn. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 3 March 2004, responding to 11 February 2004 letter.

oooo. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 8 March 2004, responding to 26 January 2004 letter involving coordination.

pppp. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 5 April 2004, responding to 25 August 2003 letter concerning FWCA report.

qqqq. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 12 April 2004, responding to 5 April 2003 letter concerning coordination efforts.

rrrr. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 21 April 2004, responding to the ongoing discussion of coordination efforts.

ssss. Letter from Vicksburg District to EPA, 27 April 2004, requesting data on the nonstructural alternative proposed by EPA.

tttt. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 12 May 2004, requesting funding for continued coordination.

uuuu. Letter from Earthjustice to Vicksburg District, 30 September 2004, requesting Vicksburg District and FWS to reinstate coordination efforts.

vvvv. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 26 October 2004, requesting coordination efforts be reinitiated.

www. Petition against Backwater Project, 7 December 2004, 83 residents of Holly Bluff.

xxxx. Letter from American Rivers to Vicksburg District, 19 April 2005, requesting copies of materials relating to the Yazoo Backwater Project.

yyyy. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 1 August 2005, responding to 21 July 2005 letter requesting attendance at interagency meetings.

zzzz. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 4 August 2005, requesting funding for continued coordination.

aaaa. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 11 August 2005, providing copies of 29 July 2005 interagency meeting presentations.

bbbb. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 18 August 2005, responding to 4 August 2005 letter requesting funding and further commenting.

cccc. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 7 September 2005, responding to request for extending comment period on appendixes.

dddd. Letter from MDWFP to Vicksburg District, 15 September 2005, offering no negative comments relative to the project.

eeee. Letter from Board of Mississippi Levee Board Commissioners to Vicksburg District, 30 September 2005, providing comments to each appendix.

ffff. Letter from MDEQ to Vicksburg District, 30 September 2005, providing comments to environmental appendixes.

gggg. Letter from Natural Resources Conservation Service to Vicksburg District, 11 October 2005, providing no negative comments relative to the project.

hhhh. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 11 October 2005, providing comments to environmental appendixes.

iiii. Letter from NRCS to Vicksburg District, 11 October 2005, responding to the appendixes and providing no further comments.

jjjj. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 28 November 2005, concerning the revised BA for pondberry and Louisiana black bear.

kkkk. Letter from EPA to Vicksburg District, 6 December 2005, providing comments to the Revised Draft Wetland, Water Quality, and Mitigation Appendixes.

llll. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 15 December 2005, responding to receiving the Biological Assessment and requesting formal consultation on pondberry.

mmmm. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 20 December 2005, responding to 15 December 2005 letter.

nnnn. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 4 January 2006, providing 30-day response to revised BA.

oooo. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 18 January 2006, responding to 4 January 2006 letter reiterating that formal consultation on threatened and endangered species began in early December 2005.

pppp. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 27 January 2006, responding to 18 January 2006 letter requesting additional data on threatened and endangered species.

qqqq. Letter from Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners to Vicksburg District, 30 January 2006, commending Vicksburg District for entering formal consultation with FWS over threatened and endangered species.

rrrr. Letter from Vicksburg District to Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners, 10 March 2006, responding to 30 January 2006 letter inviting the Board to participate in further meetings with FWS.

ssss. Letter from MDEQ to Vicksburg District, 5 July 2006, discussing concerns over mitigation lands within the Backwater Area that are now being managed by their staff.

tttt. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 16 March 2007, transmitting MOA on pondberry conservation measures.

uuuu. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 30 April 2007, transmitting comments on the draft BO.

vvvvv. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 2 July 2007, transmitting the final BO.

wwwww. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 11 July 2006, requesting an extension of the consultation period through 31 August 2006.

xxxxx. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 17 July 2006, responding to 11 July 2006 letter extending consultation period until 16 August 2006.

yyyyy. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 8 August 2006, responding to 17 July 2006 letter requesting additional consultation time.

zzzzz. Letter from FWS to Vicksburg District, 10 August 2006, providing review of Backwater project on Louisiana black bear.

aaaaa. Letter from Vicksburg District to FWS, 15 August 2006, responding to 11 October 2005 letter and providing responses to FWS study comments.